

that our frequent boast of unity among our people is sadly belied by the almost solid vote from the French speaking districts. We are to have a fight, and the sooner we have it the better. But let the parties meet, as they did in 1891 and in 1887, on questions of fiscal policy or other great lines of policy, and in the name of all that is good, let us put an end, for all time to come, to these racial cries which we hear echoed time and again in this House by men like the hon. member for Labelle and which, I regret to say, are the stock in trade of the Liberal party in the province of Quebec. Why, Mr. Speaker, what did the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Hon. Mr. Préfontaine) say when the fight was over the other day? Did he say that the policy of the government prevailed? Not at all. He said that it was a question of a French-speaking premier—it was a question of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's popularity. That, he said, was the whole cry and in saying that he gave away the whole case. I would wish that when the history of this country comes to be written it may be said of every premier who ever guided the destinies of this Dominion that he played well his part, that he acted in the interests of the Dominion as a whole, and that the success he obtained was not due to any appeals to prejudice or passion, but to the great measures he instituted for the development of this country, and that it was owing to his wise policy in the general interests that he became entrenched in the affections of the people.

Mr. E. D. SMITH (Wentworth). It is quite evident, Mr. Speaker, that the policy of silence is that which the government has chosen to adopt on this address, and perhaps in view of the incompetency which they have so signally displayed in the administration of public affairs, that policy is the wisest one they can adopt under the circumstances. I would prefer, Mr. Speaker, having to follow one of these hon. gentlemen on the other side than take up the debate after the effective speech of my hon. friend who has just taken his seat, but I promise that I shall not detain the House at any length. In the speech from the Throne, the desire is expressed that the session should be a short one. In that desire I am sure we all agree, but the Opposition would be derelict in its duty if it failed to take advantage of any opportunity to throw the broad light of publicity on the incompetent record of the present administration. The bill of fare given us in the speech from the Throne is certainly a very meagre one—one well befitting, as my hon. friend from Montmorency (Mr. Casgrain) has said, this lenten season, and, if we should judge the menu by the sparsity of its dishes, we certainly should not be long in disposing of it. There are only four subjects presented to us, and of these

some are of a trifling character. The only important one is the amendment to the Railway Bill, which, though an amendment to an important Bill, is, nevertheless, but an amendment. We have also the question of the presentation of the award of the Alaska boundary commission, which is not a proposition of the government but simply a presentation to this House of the award of the commission. We have further a Militia Bill, and in order to pad out the programme we have a proposal to increase the Mounted Police in the Northwest Territories. It is rather to be wondered at that, in order to make the list a little longer, the government did not propose to increase the Civil Service to the extent of a hundred clerks or so, which would have been quite as important a matter as the proposed increase of 100 men in the Mounted Police to insert in the speech from the Throne. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the speech from the Throne is remarkable rather for its sins of omission than its sins of commission. With regard to the Mounted Police, I am sure every one will agree that, if there is necessity in the Northwest for an increase, if crime in that country has gone unpunished owing to the deficiency in that corps, no one will object to the increase; but, it will have to be proved that such increase is necessary. However, as the Bill is not before us, I shall not discuss it in detail. But, if, in connection with the Mounted Police, there should be a larger number than are necessary to keep order in the Northwest Territories, I for one, would not be sorry if it is considered as a nucleus of a mounted infantry for this country.

Then, we are promised the Militia Bill. We cannot discuss that until it comes before the House. But, for my part, I shall quite concur in the increase in the efficiency, the number and the equipment of our militia. I am sure that no one on this side will object to any reasonable, sane, judicious plan for promoting the efficiency and increasing the strength of the militia of Canada. I am only sorry, in this connection—and in this I speak on my own responsibility alone—that the Minister of Militia and the government do not go a step further. In addition to strengthening our militia and improving their equipment, I should like to have seen a proposal to make a small beginning towards the establishment of a Canadian navy. I know that this is a proposition that has not been discussed very much; still, I believe that there is a large body of people in this country who believe that the time has come when we should take a position more in keeping with our dignity as a growing and powerful country than that which we occupy at the present time. We have a magnificent and growing over sea commerce—over \$250,000,000. This is a commerce that is worth defending. At present, we are not spending a cent, we are not doing any-